

Public Service and Trust Commission
Juror Security Subcommittee Meeting Minutes

The meeting of the Juror Security Subcommittee was held at 2:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 5, 2015 in Conference Room 133 at 225 Spring Street, Wethersfield, CT.

Members Present: Esther Harris (Chair), Melanie Kerr, Jeffrey Getz, Ines Nieves, Denise Poncini, Roy Smith, Robin Smith , and Kimberly Symmes.

Members Not Present: Kevin Grosse, Attorney Raymond Hassett, Buffy Irizarry, Richard Taddei, Judge Brian Fischer, and Richard Loffredo.

The following issues were discussed by attendees:

1. Reviewed and approved minutes from 09/09/2015.
2. Introduction of new members: Denise Poncini from Judicial Legal Services and Lieutenant Ricardo Taddei.
3. At the last meeting, there was the question of whether counseling or the like is offered to jurors who have served on a stressful or traumatizing case. Esther reports that there is a process already in place that involves EAP. However, Esther felt that this concern is outside the scope of this committee. She will consider having ADA committee look at this.
4. Melanie Kerr drafted a Juror Security Template that addresses many of the action plan items. This template serves as a draft for the Juror Security Manual. This template would be distributed to each District's Chief Clerk to be completed with the appropriate team members within their district. They would address their procedures for each section outlined in the template. Together, committee members reviewed the template to check for substance and make any changes and/or suggestions. Minor changes were discussed and it was agreed upon to omit sections 9 and 10 as these include issues that may be handled better within another committee or issues where changes are in the works. Melanie will edit the template as discussed. It was suggested that the Chief Clerk in each district determine which team members should be involved with answering each section of the template. This should include a marshal and court staff member. Robin Smith and Roy Smith will meet with the appropriate team members within their districts (Hartford and Tolland) to test the template before it is sent out to all the courthouses. It may be helpful to have Melanie Kerr or Jeff Getz observe this meeting and be available to explain what they are asking be addressed within each section of the template.
5. There is the issue of jurors being exposed to the defendant's family; jurors have called Jury Administration reporting they were being followed when walking to their cars. Bob Kilpatrick attended a previous meeting to discuss the security issue with juror parking. It was reported that he is in the process of looking into the possibility of having shuttles for jurors from the court house to the parking lots. Esther, Jeff, Melanie, and Bob will meet to discuss this further.

6. It was reported that a letter was sent out to all districts advising them to open at the same time. We are unsure if all districts are following this. The Jury Clerk's Manual has a process for marshal's when jurors enter the courthouse. It was suggested that if there is any expedited process in place for jurors, it should only be that jurors are asked to come to the front of the line but still go through required metal detector process. This is an issue that will be addressed with the Juror Security Template. Each location can identify their current process, if any, for expedited procedures.
7. A template for a post-trial letter was drafted by Esther and submitted to Judge Fischer for review. This has been reviewed and amended by Judge Fischer and is ready to be submitted to the larger security committee for approval. The only new information with this letter is that there will be a contact person listed for the juror to contact with any concerns. The contact person would be assigned by the District's Chief Clerk. This letter would prove that jurors are advised that they are not obligated to speak with them. The letter would also be signed by a judge, ideally it should be the trial judge but it does not have to be. Members agree this letter is okay to submit to the larger security committee.
8. The meeting adjourned at 3:55 p.m.
9. The next meeting date will be emailed to members.